



Interim Report on Transportation Services in the Dakota County Community Services Division

**Prepared by the Dakota County Transportation Collaborative
with Assistance from Dakota County Community Services**

October, 2002

- ❑ **Charge to Transportation Collaborative, Sources of Information, Transportation Elements**
- ❑ **Summary of Transportation Services Data, Dakota County
Community Services Departments**
- ❑ **Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses in Transportation Services**
- ❑ **Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Charge to the Transportation Collaborative of Dakota County

- Review Community Services Division departments transit services expenditures.
 - Learn about how funds are expended, how much for which types of clients, what transit resources are used.
 - Discover what is working well, what could use improvement, how services are coordinated, systems issues.
 - Process: request information from Community Services Division departments; discuss facts and findings, form conclusions, make recommendations. Staff assistance from Community Services Planning
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- Recommendations to County Board
 - Timeline: begin in January, 2002, product by Fall, 2002

Summary findings and conclusions

1. Transportation services in the Community Services Division are provided/purchased separately by departments/sections and are focused on the needs and service plans of particular clients.
 - ❑ Each department in the Division serves a unique client group and uses a variety of transportation resources ranging from staff to the purchase of services of volunteer drivers, buses, taxis and vans.
 - ❑ The separation appears to result in focus on the right service at the right time for the best price for clients. Some questions remain, however, concerning the possibilities for coordination and greater efficiencies.
 - ❑ Transportation services are always provided within the context of a service plan, transportation is a means to an end - achieving results to complete the client's plan.

Examples of Clients Served	Reasons for Trips
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental Health• Chemical Health• Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavioral health appointments• Medical appointments• Court hearings• Family visitations• Training and employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children receiving services for child protection and neglect, foster care	Medical, dental and mental health appointments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persons with developmental disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Day programs and employment• Supervised living• Medical appointments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persons seeking employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get to employment and training
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Juveniles in non-residential programs• Adults in "Expanded Life Choices" program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To and from schools to programs• To and from jobs•

Transportation Elements Diagram

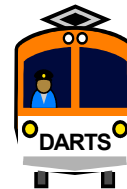
Dakota County Offices

Social Services
Employment and Economic Assistance
Community Corrections

- Purchase transportation services from private agencies

Private Agencies

- "Sell" services to County
- Provide service to citizens



Public and Personal Transportation

- Other modes of transportation available



Private Automobiles



Taxis



Metro Mobility



MT/MVTA

2. For the most part, the County is the transportation provider of last resort, the great majority of clients in most programs find or provide their own transportation or have it provided by family, friends or others.
3. Considerable resources are used to transport clients, about \$ 1,431,176 spent in 2001 by the Division departments, this included purchased services only and does not include the costs of staff who sometimes transport clients themselves.

Summary of 2001 Expenditures in Community Services Division for Transportation

Social Services

- Adult Services	\$ 432,383
- Children and Family	199,000
- Developmental Disabilities	240,000

Employment and Economic Assistance

- Workforce Services	449,875
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Community Corrections

- Juveniles and Adults services	<u>109,918</u>
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Total	\$ 1,431,176*
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4. There are opportunities for further coordination and cooperation between County departments and transportation-providing agencies, further discussion is necessary. The Collaborative is reviewing GIS maps to determine if there are opportunities for coordination of transportation services based upon the client services, location of riders and trip destinations.
5. These include strengths (i.e., using lowest cost services, public transportation in the northern part of the county, volunteer-based transportation programs and agencies operating vans service for community travel) as well as weaknesses (i.e., no county-wide public transportation network where the different transportation providers are connected, taxi use may be higher than necessary, lack of availability of night and weekend services, lack of clear leadership for transit).
6. Other jurisdictions are struggling with many of the same issues related to transportation services.

Summary recommendation:

- ❑ The Transportation Collaborative should continue to study the opportunities and needs for improved cooperation and coordination of transportation services. The sub-issues to be addressed are:
 1. Are there 'generic' transportation services where further coordination might result in increased effectiveness, lower costs and/or better services?
 2. Can a review of GIS maps help to determine if there are opportunities for coordination of transportation services based upon the types of trips and the location of riders and destinations?
 3. How can obstacles related to the time of day of transportation services be addressed?
 4. What are the implications of coordination/'centralization' of transportation services e.g. responsiveness to departments needs. and is having a single person in the Community Services Division designated as the "transportation coordinator" the best solution or is a single access point/system more beneficial to clients.
 5. What savings might accrue if transportation services could be made more efficient? What enhancements could be made with savings or added resources?
 6. How can the County and other agencies build on the strengths and ameliorate the weaknesses in current transportation services?
 7. The County and other agencies should look for best practices that would be appropriate for application in Dakota County.